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Letter dated 5 May 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

I have the honour to attach herewith the national report of Portugal on gender equality and empowerment of women for the annual ministerial review to be held during the High-level Segment of the 2010 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Council under item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) José Filipe **Moraes Cabral**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* E/2010/100.

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Annex to the letter dated 5 May 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

Annual ministerial review

National voluntary report of Portugal

Summary

Development policy is an integral part of the Portuguese foreign policy. It is drafted and implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in close cooperation with other ministries, non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations.

The objectives and goals laid down in the Millennium Declaration are at the core of the Portuguese development strategy. In this context, Portugal has clearly adopted an integral and broad-ranging vision of development, which requires increased coordination efforts at the national level, as well as with partner countries and with other donors, so as to deliver more efficient aid and to assist our partner countries to accelerate their progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

The first part of the report outlines the efforts of the Government of Portugal in the implementation of national development strategies and policies. It identifies the main priorities and recipients of Portuguese development cooperation, describes the institutional framework in place and elaborates on the principles of policy coherence, aid effectiveness, as well as on the importance of building and consolidating partnerships with civil society at large.

The second part of the report deals with the specific thematic focus of this year's Annual Ministerial Review: the implementation of the internationally agreed goals and commitments with regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It comprises a section on the public policies and activities in the area of gender equality and then analyses the gender perspective in the framework of the national development cooperation.

At the national level, the Government of Portugal is actively engaged in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The appointment of a Secretary of State for Equality in the new Government that followed the legislative elections of last September clearly demonstrates the political relevance given to the issue of gender equality by the Government of Portugal. This strong political will has also been expressed by increased financial support, the enlargement of human resources dedicated to gender-related issues, as well as the adoption of legislation and specific action plans. Considerable investment has been undertaken in the human and financial resources of the National Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (the national institution under the Presidency of the Council of Ministers), and the budget for the promotion of gender equality policies has been considerably reinforced for the period running from 2007 to 2013, reaching €83 million. In addition, five new national action plans with implications on gender equality have been adopted since 2007: the Third National Plan for Equality; the Third National

Plan against Domestic Violence; the First National Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings; the National Action Plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and an Action Programme for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation.

Moreover, the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment constitutes an objective and a guiding principle of our national development strategies. It is our understanding that progress in all the other Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without a serious investment in the empowerment of women. Worldwide, women often carry the burden for meeting their families' needs for food and water and are responsible for decisions that affect economic activity, including making choices related to their families' investments. Thus, without making significant progress in advancing women's economic and social empowerment and strengthening women's rights, progress in reducing poverty and eliminating hunger will be difficult to achieve. There is an increased awareness of the role women have to play in effective crisis response, as well as on the path towards sustainable economic growth and development.

Portuguese development cooperation recognizes this trend, and the final part of the report identifies some concrete initiatives related to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in key sectors, such as health, education and economic empowerment, that have been successfully implemented. Portugal is fully committed to the consolidation of this approach in its development cooperation, as clearly shown by the current revision of the national development cooperation strategy on gender and the greater emphasis given to this issue in the political dialogue with partner countries, including in the elaboration and follow-up to the bilateral indicative cooperation programmes.

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I. Efforts by the Government of Portugal to implement national development strategies and policies

A. Portuguese development policy framework

1. Development policy is an integral part of the Portuguese foreign policy and it is oriented by the international efforts to reduce global poverty, having the objectives and goals laid down in the Millennium Declaration at the core of its strategy. In this context, Portugal has adopted an integral and broad-ranging vision of development, which requires increased coordination efforts at the national level, as well as with partner countries and with other donors (bilaterally and multilaterally), so as to deliver more efficient aid and to assist partner countries to accelerate their progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

2. The geographic focus of Portuguese aid is on the Portuguese-speaking African countries and Timor-Leste. The historical and cultural ties have brought about the development of an institutional and legal framework similar to the Portuguese one in partner countries, which makes it easier to capitalize on Portugal's comparative advantages in relation to other donors — language and know-how — not just geographically but at the sectoral level as well. Portugal is also one of the international donors with the greatest geographical concentration of aid. The Portuguese development cooperation strategy has been designed with the goal of avoiding dispersion of resources and improving an integrated system, for the sake of more rationality, efficiency and effectiveness of aid.

3. Regarding the most relevant intervention sectors, Portuguese cooperation's priorities have been streamlined along two fundamental criteria: (a) partner countries' needs, as identified in their national development strategy documents; and (b) the specific added value of Portuguese cooperation, bearing in mind the division of labour and complementarity among donors. Based on the principles of sector concentration and reinforcing the Millennium Development Goals, efforts are also made towards increasing focus on education, health, professional training and institutional capacity-building, from a perspective of sustainable development and poverty reduction.

B. Organization

4. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs plays the leading role within the Government, with the responsibility to coordinate all activities regarding development cooperation policy planning and formulation. Portuguese cooperation is structured according to a decentralized implementation model, and the main actors include several entities from the central Administration, the local Administration, including city councils and municipal associations, civil society organizations, such as development non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as foundations, universities and research institutions. The Portuguese Development Agency was created in January 2003 as the central organ of Portuguese development cooperation responsible for the supervision and coordination of all development aid programmes and projects financed and implemented by State bodies and other public entities. The Portuguese Development Agency is also responsible for the centralization of information concerning projects promoted by private entities.

C. Volume of aid

5. The Government of Portugal has identified the increase of Portuguese Official Development Assistance (ODA) as one of the key objectives of its development cooperation, aiming to meet international commitments in compliance with the Millennium Development Goals as regards both the quantity and quality of ODA.

6. Owing to the requirements imposed by efforts to consolidate the budget deficit (European Union Stability and Growth Pact) and the effects of the international financial and economic crisis, Portugal has had some difficulty in complying with the internationally established goals regarding ODA. In 2006, Portugal's ratio of ODA/gross national income (GNI) was at 0.21 per cent, having increased to 0.27 per cent in 2008. Between 2006 and 2008, the total official and private flows underwent several oscillations, owing essentially to the variations in foreign direct investment and export credits. Faced with this scenario, Portugal set a new timeline to increase its ODA so as to comply with the 0.7 per cent ODA/GNI ratio requirement in 2015.

7. Portugal's ODA is directed mainly towards Portuguese-speaking countries, all situated in sub-Saharan Africa (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe) and Timor-Leste. In accordance with United Nations classifications, five of the six priority countries for Portuguese cooperation are considered least developed countries, with Cape Verde being the exception, having been the second such country to achieve middle income country status in 2008. Overall, this geographical grouping received nearly 60 per cent of the total bilateral ODA over the period 2006-2008 (on average, nearly €124 million).

8. Portugal has sought to align its participation in the multilateral sphere with its external policy and bilateral cooperation priorities: (a) focusing on Africa, particularly on least developed countries and fragile States; (b) supporting stabilization and the transition to the development phase; (c) aligning and harmonizing its programming with partner countries' national policies and strategies, with the objective of achieving the Millennium Development Goals; and (d) strengthening partner countries' position within the international community. In this context, the Portuguese Development Agency has also promoted complementarity between bilateral and multilateral action, through active partnership with several multilateral development institutions, including through cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Timor-Leste and with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Guinea-Bissau (intervention in the area of emergency obstetric and neonatal care).

D. Guiding principles of policy coherence and aid effectiveness

9. The pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals has made it necessary to reinforce the coherence of national and international policies in a variety of areas with development policies. It is fundamental to ensure that development goals will not be neglected when other policies that have an impact on developing countries are formulated, acknowledging that the achievement of development goals does not depend only on cooperation policies and activities; it also depends on the impact that decisions made in other political areas may have on developing countries.

10. Portugal has shown a growing concern for policy coherence for development as an important instrument for effective and efficient aid, having progressively come

to include this theme in the formulation of its public policies, thereby assuring coherence for development among national and international policies. The mainstreaming of the Millennium Development Goals in national strategy documents is a good example of this policy. Within the efforts to promote policy coherence for development, certain instruments have a special importance for Portugal's external activity in areas which are considered strategic, from both the political-diplomatic and the development cooperation perspectives: the national sustainable development strategy, the immigrant integration plan and the national plan for equality.

11. At the international level, Portugal has subscribed to and promoted the international commitments regarding policy coherence for development in various forums, in particular within the framework of the European Union, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations. The other concern on this topic is the promotion of coherence with partner countries' development policies. Portugal adopts multi-year country-based programming strategies with its partners — in line with the time frames of partner countries' poverty reduction strategy papers — which are the sole guiding documents framing bilateral cooperation. One of the goals of this multi-year programming is to make it possible to provide information to partner countries on the expected financing for projects that have undergone prior negotiation, so that these amounts can be inscribed into their State budgets.

12. Finally, policy coherence is a key instrument towards aid effectiveness, which guides Portuguese development cooperation efforts towards a greater concentration of aid, the rationalization of aid flows and the implementation of a results-based management system, in order to increase Portuguese cooperation's effectiveness and improve the impact of its development assistance. The principles of ownership, alignment, harmonization, management for results and mutual accountability are fundamental in the definition of Portuguese development cooperation policies. Capacity development and triangular cooperation at the service of fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals, based on a regular and transparent dialogue with partners, are examples of these policy choices.

E. Civil society partnerships

13. Support for civil society is also a priority in Portuguese development cooperation, as a strong civil society is an important element in the consolidation of democracies and a permanent test to the capacity of societies to tackle issues such as poverty, gender equality and free access to education.

14. Development NGOs are an ever more important partner within civil society, and this is reflected in the growing number of projects carried out by those organizations and co-financed by the Portuguese Development Agency. This policy of including development NGOs in development cooperation in partnership with governmental activities has been carried out in close collaboration with the National Platform of Development NGOs, with a view to fulfil the commitments of the Millennium Declaration and increasing aid effectiveness and transparency. In addition to two specific grant lines to co-finance development cooperation projects and development education projects (with an important focus on the promotion of awareness of the Millennium Development Goals), the Portuguese Development

Agency directly supports projects carried out by development NGOs included in the bilateral programming with partner countries. One such project merits special reference.

15. The "Healthcare for all" project in Sao Tome and Principe is an integrated intervention in primary and preventive health care all over the country, based on a strategy that is focused on community needs, within the context of a public/private partnership between the Portuguese Development Agency, the Ministry of Health of Sao Tome and Principe and the Portuguese development NGO, Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr. This project has allowed for the great achievement of having Sao Tome and Principe — that ranked 131 of 182 in the 2009 UNDP Human Development Index — declared by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund as being on track to attain the Millennium Development Goals in the health sphere. While doing so, the project is also significantly increasing the proportion of people with access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation with indicators that rate among the highest for countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

16. Finally, Portugal is creating new instruments to enhance civil society participation and to strengthen the national public's knowledge about development and the Millennium Development Goals. Two are worth mentioning. First, the creation of the Development Cooperation Forum, which is a space for debate on development issues, chaired by the Minister of Development, and which meets on a biannual basis. Participants are members of local councils, development NGOs, trade unions, business companies with projects of corporate social responsibility, as well as universities and foundations playing a key role in the elaboration of the Portuguese development cooperation sectoral strategies. Second, the Development Days event, already in its third year, has proven to be an event that promotes a better understanding and debate among the several national development actors and between them and Portuguese public opinion on development issues at large.

II. Implementing the internationally agreed development goals and commitments with regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women

A. National developments

17. The Government of Portugal is actively engaged in developing national policies and strategies in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women, which is understood as a goal in itself but also as a means and a condition to achieve all the other Millennium Development Goals.

Gender equality in the State administration

18. Equality between women and men has been a fundamental principle of the Constitution of the Republic of Portugal since 1976, leading to the development of a very egalitarian legislative framework. The Constitution enshrines the promotion of equality between men and women as a fundamental task of the State, which has the responsibility to adopt relevant policies and norms in this area. The Constitution also establishes that the law must promote equality in the exercise of civil and

political rights and non-discrimination on the grounds of sex in accessing political jobs.

19. Between 2007 and 2010, the policy of the Government of Portugal in the area of gender equality has been guided by three National Plans: (a) the Third National Plan for Equality: Citizenship and Gender; (b) the Third National Plan against Domestic Violence; and (c) the First National Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings. In 2009, the National Programme of Action to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation and the National Action Plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security were both adopted.

20. The budget for the promotion of gender equality policies was considerably reinforced for the period 2007-2013 in order to make available the resources needed for the implementation of these policies, with a specific funding line of €83 million distributed to seven different areas. The Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality — under the Presidency of the Council of Ministers — is in charge of managing several of these technical and financial support lines, and 248 projects are thus far being implemented. Examples of projects include: (a) support to initiatives of NGOs and other civil society organizations operating in the field of gender equality; (b) training in gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence; (c) development and evaluation of databases, diagnosis and good practices guides; (d) campaigns aimed at raising awareness and promoting gender equality as well as combating gender-based violence; (e) integrated intervention to combat domestic violence and trafficking in human beings; and (f) promoting plans for gender equality in central and local public administrations and in enterprises and support to women's entrepreneurship.

21. Effectively mainstreaming gender equality and non-discrimination at all levels of the public administration is a political commitment. Indeed, having a strategy for achieving equality is considered a prerequisite for good governance by the Government of Portugal. Several resolutions adopted by the Council of Ministers on this matter have been approved, such as resolution 82/2005, which established the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation of all legal Acts, and resolution 64/2006, which established the integration of a gender equality dimension into the language used in the normative acts and in the written and visual language used in the public administration.

22. The commitment to mainstream gender and non-discrimination in all Government activities is reflected in the adoption of equality plans, in the institutionalization of ministerial equality advisers and teams and in the progressive development of protocols with municipalities. At the local level, Act No. 115/2006 regularized local social networks introducing, for the first time, a gender equality dimension as a factor for local development. In order to ensure the institutionalization of equality advisers in all 308 municipalities, the Government of Portugal is considering the adoption of legislation establishing the nomination of gender equality advisers at the local level.

23. Portugal is also active in generating and disseminating regular data and information disaggregated by sex. "Gender Equality in Portugal" has been published every two years since 1980 by the national mechanism for gender equality, with statistical data disaggregated by sex and legislation for each policy area. At the same time, Portugal has been improving gender indicators and developing new instruments that allow for closer monitoring and effective evaluation of gender

equality, namely: (a) a gender database, which is updated regularly, in the National Statistical Office website since 2004; (b) an equality website, aimed at supporting and promoting the implementation of mainstreaming of gender and non-discrimination at all levels of the public administration, which was created in March 2009; and (c) a gender observatory, being set up by the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality in order to improve efficiency in the implementation of gender equality policies.

24. The above-mentioned Third National Plan for Equality is the operational basis for the implementation of the Government's strategy to mainstream gender equality and non-discrimination at all levels of public administration. This Plan advocates for the integration of the gender dimension into diverse policy areas, and it advocates for specific actions towards the promotion of gender equality, including positive action. In addition to these structural measures, the Plan also includes measures and actions aimed at combating gender inequalities and promoting equality between women and men in different priority policy areas, such as: education, research and training; economic independence; reconciliation of professional and private family life; inclusion and local development; health, environment and territory; and sports and culture. Furthermore, the Plan pays special attention to the promotion of women's employability and entrepreneurship as a means of promoting their economic independence. The Government of Portugal is committed to adopt a fourth Plan for Equality after the evaluation of the current one.

25. Women's access to political decision-making spheres is unfortunately an area that is progressing at a slower than optimal pace, in particular regarding the proportion of seats held by women in the National Parliament: 17.4 per cent of seats in the October 1999 elections, 19.6 per cent in the March 2002 elections; and 21 per cent in the February 2005 elections. Regarding Governmental seats, the Portuguese Government (Ministers and Secretaries of State) comprised 9.4 per cent of women in 1999, 11.3 per cent in 2005 and 18.2 per cent in 2009. On 20 April 2006, the National Parliament adopted a bill that set at 33.3 per cent the minimum representation for both sexes in eligible positions in the electoral lists for the National Parliament, the European Parliament and Municipalities, therefore having an effect on the percentage of elected members, corresponding to a quantitative threshold to parity. This Law produced effects in all the three elections held in 2009: for the European Parliament, where 36.4 per cent of women were elected, compared with 25 per cent at the last elections; for national elections, with 27.4 per cent elected, compared with 21 per cent in 2005, and for municipalities, 29 per cent elected, compared with 18.2 per cent before. In 2011, the National Parliament will evaluate the impact of this Law in the promotion of equal participation of women and men, and revise it, if necessary.

Education

26. Portugal is committed to work towards eliminating gender disparity in all levels of education. In Portugal, women represent 47.9 per cent of the population with basic education; 50.8 per cent with secondary education; and 60.8 per cent of the population with higher education. The majority of students enrolled in secondary education (52.7 per cent in 2007/2008) and in higher education (53.4 per cent, between 1995/1996 and 2008/2009) are women.

27. In 2005, the Government of Portugal launched the New Opportunities Initiative, aimed at extending the minimum training reference to 12 years for young people and adults. The strategy behind this initiative rests on two fundamental pillars: (a) making vocational education a real option that provides new opportunities to young people; and (b) raising the basic training level of the workforce, providing new opportunities for learning and evolving. The New Opportunities Initiative allows for adults to go through a process of recognition, validation and certification of academic and vocational competences and/or a training process. This initiative is having a positive impact on women's education and training, as they accounted for around 54 per cent of the people enrolled and 65 per cent of the trainees in adult education and training courses.

Gender-based violence

28. Portugal is also taking important steps in adopting strong political and legislative measures to combat violence against women and girls, including domestic violence. Mindful of this problem, the Government approved the Third National Plan against Domestic Violence (2007-2010), which clearly points towards a policy consolidation to prevent and fight domestic violence. The Plan integrates policies to prevent and combat the phenomenon, based on a horizontal approach with a particular emphasis on awareness-raising and information campaigns, training professionals and protecting the victims, aiming towards their reinsertion into social life.

29. Among the measures adopted to fight this problem are: ongoing awareness-raising initiatives aimed at the population and technical staff working with victims and aggressors, combined with multidisciplinary training of those most directly involved in assisting and protecting victims of domestic violence, including judges, prosecutors, lawyers and judicial workers, security forces, health-care professionals, social workers, shelter teams and NGO experts. Since 2005, annual campaigns against violence against women have been launched, including media campaigns to prevent violence among youth, such as the campaign on dating relationships, mobilization of social agents from the health, education and social intervention areas. In order to improve knowledge of this phenomenon, the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality has promoted several studies, including a national survey of gender-based violence, which was published in 2009.

30. Since 2000, ill-treatment has become a public crime, meaning that anyone can lodge a complaint and police authorities are obliged to investigate. As of January 2006, a standard notification was created, which makes it possible to gather more accurate and detailed statistics on domestic violence, thus allowing the production of reliable, internationally comparable indicators on the extension and configuration of the phenomenon. Also, under the Integrated Programme of Proximity Policing, proximity and victim support teams were created, aiming at the prevention of domestic violence, the provision of support to victims and follow-up after violence. The Criminal Code, revised in September 2007, for the first time classified the crime of domestic violence, which became an autonomous and specific crime punishable by one to five years' imprisonment. This legal framework was completed last September with the enactment of Law 112/2009 on compensation to victims of violent crimes and domestic violence and of a separate Law on the legal regime applicable to the prevention of domestic violence and to the protection of and provision of assistance to its victims. A considerable investment has been made in

the quantity and quality of psychosocial responses — crisis centres, emergency help lines and shelters — by public bodies and civil society. A free domestic violence victim information help line has been active since 1998 to give victims information, support and advice, and a national network of domestic violence centres was set up in 2005 to provide an integrated response to cases of domestic violence.

31. Portugal is also developing efforts to combat trafficking in persons and prosecute traffickers. In 2007, Portugal began implementing an integrated and systematic National Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings (2007-2010). This Plan's key structural element is the symbiosis between the effort to suppress trafficking and the promotion of human rights through the adoption of strategies to raise awareness, and provide support to, empower and integrate victims. An Observatory on Trafficking in Persons was created in 2008, with the goal to collect, analyse and disseminate data from various institutions working in this field as part of the implementation of this Plan. A study on trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation was conducted in 2007 at the national level and was published in 2009. Also worth mentioning is the creation of a shelter for victims of trafficking and their minor children, run by an NGO with Government funding, and the launch of a national campaign against trafficking in persons in 2008, with a leaflet printed in nine languages.

32. Measures to raise the awareness of judges and security forces and services, namely through extensive training on methods to interview victims of trafficking and provide emotional support, were also promoted, together with training for NGOs, help line technicians, public prosecutors and law enforcement agents. A model for locating, identifying and integrating victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation that involved all police forces and relevant NGOs was defined to establish an articulated process for assisting victims of trafficking. The implementation of this National Plan is being monitored by an independent entity, which will conduct an impact assessment. A Second National Plan is envisaged for 2010.

33. The revision of the Criminal Code in 2007 introduced substantial amendments in the previous definition of human trafficking by integrating this crime into the chapter on crimes against personal liberty. A reference to children as victims of these crimes was explicitly included, as was trafficking for purposes of adoption. This Code punishes those who knowingly use the sexual services of victims of trafficking and also criminalizes withholding, hiding and destroying identification or travel documents, and also includes punitive measures for collective entities.

34. Finally, a national Programme of Action to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation was launched in 2009 within the framework of the Third National Plan for Equality. The Programme was drafted by a working group that integrates the public administration, NGOs and intergovernmental organizations and has proved to be a powerful instrument, not only for the promotion of the human rights and the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls who are submitted to those practices or are at risk to undergo female genital mutilation, but also as an instrument for promoting gender equality and fighting gender-based violence. It is structured around the areas of prevention, support to and integration of victims, training, academic research and advocacy, and it promotes awareness-raising mechanisms to enhance the general understanding of the population as regards the physical, psychological and social consequences of female genital mutilation,

aiming at discouraging its practice. The Criminal Code includes a disposition that relates to the matter of female genital mutilation by considering as a criminal offence the abuse of the body or health of another person that hinders the person's ability to experience sexual fulfilment.

Partnerships for equality

35. Other developments in the area of gender equality that are worth mentioning include: the National Strategy of Education for Development (2010-2015), prepared by partners from the public administration and civil society and adopted in September 2009, which responds to gender concerns and integrates the fight against gender stereotyping among its main principles; and a National Action Plan for the Implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on "Women, peace and security (2009-2013)", which was adopted in August 2009. This Plan was prepared by an inter-ministerial working group that launched a public consultation to the public administration, civil society, NGOs, research centres and other relevant stakeholders, and it developed mechanisms for the implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the activities and measures identified to accomplish its five strategic main goals. An increase in the participation of women in political and decision-making spheres, training on gender equality and on gender-based violence and the dissemination of knowledge on women, peace and security are some of its main goals.

36. Finally, Portugal hosted the second Community of Portuguese Language Countries Ministerial Conference on Gender Equality in the first week of May 2010. The main goal of this Conference was the promotion and consolidation of a gender equality agenda in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, striving for progress in the creation of a strategic action plan for gender equality in the Community and in the adoption of gender equality legislation by States members of the Community.

B. Gender equality in development cooperation

37. The promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment constitutes an objective and a guiding principle of Portuguese development strategies. It is our understanding that progress in all the other Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without a serious investment in the empowerment of women. With this in mind, Portugal has been developing an approach that includes: (a) the promotion of gender equality in the political dialogue with partner Governments; and (b) a twin track approach consisting of gender specific deliverables in bilateral programmes and projects and temporary special measures. Priority is given to enhance the social role of women, their equal participation in political decision-making and economic security, focusing on access to water and sanitation, food security, economic opportunities and the financial markets. Special attention is also provided to the specific impacts of climate change on women's lives, as well as to the promotion of their sexual and reproductive health and rights and education.

38. The national development cooperation strategy on gender, developed as a sectoral guideline, is under revision with a view to overcoming the lack of priority that in the past has been given to this dimension, together with a lack of widespread gender expertise in the national development arena. In this context, and together

with the relevant national developments of the past five years, Portugal has been deeply committed to enhance coordination and harmonization of efforts in order to improve effectiveness and impact in the political dialogue with partner countries on gender equality, namely in the elaboration and follow-up of the Bilateral Indicative Cooperation Programmes.

39. In what concerns gender-specific deliveries in bilateral programmes and projects, several initiatives in key sectors such as health, education or social and communitarian development have successfully been implemented.

40. In the health sector, in general all projects like the one already mentioned in Sao Tome and Principe contemplate integrated intervention actions in maternal and child health care. The training of nurses and midwives responsible for the majority of sexual and reproductive health-care assistance should be highlighted, with training programmes in Guinea-Bissau (Bolama region) and Angola (Caxito region). Socio-communitarian projects also contain a health intervention (communicable diseases, sexual and reproductive health, and nutrition) and have specific actions in the areas of adult literacy and capacity-building directed specially to women. Projects developed in the north of Mozambique ("Costal Rural Support Programme in Cabo Delgado"), in poor quarters of Luanda or in Quinara-Guinea-Bissau, are examples of this prioritization. Portuguese development cooperation is also implementing projects aiming at improving care delivery in sexual and reproductive health, such as the construction of a basic health-care unit in Noboia-Marracuene (Mozambique), the development of a strategy for an integrated maternal and child health-care system in pilot provinces in Angola and the combat of malnutrition in pregnant women and children through the production and commercialization of a multivitamin made from locally produced ingredients in eight regions of Guinea-Bissau. Of significant relevance is the project concerning the strengthening of 12 obstetric and neonatal emergency care units in the regions of Oio and Gabú in Guinea-Bissau, a partnership of the Portuguese development cooperation, UNFPA and the Portuguese Television Network.

41. In the education sector, several interventions dedicated to promote quality access to women and girls can be highlighted, from the development of capacities to the strengthening of infrastructures. Some relevant examples include the project "Bambaram di Mindjer" (Guinea-Bissau), aiming at the qualification of women and the professionalization of early childhood educators, the building of an elementary school exclusively for girls in Palestine, and the annual financing of scholarships for young women attending undergraduate studies in local universities in Mozambique. Furthermore, regarding social infrastructure, several social centres were supported in the development of tangible actions for women's support, namely, providing communitary kindergartens that make it possible for mothers to work, such as the day-care centre "Mães de Mavalane" in Mozambique, and in the Escola Nguita Lelo in Luanda.

42. Regarding the economic sector, Portugal develops projects that support community-based organizations, such as those in Tite and Fulacunda in Guinea-Bissau, where training is given to women entrepreneurs for the development of income-generating activities. Actions are envisaged in support of the expansion of women's entrepreneurial opportunities and participation, creating conditions for women to manage their own business with financial and technical autonomy. In the context of the East Timor Development Cooperation Cluster, the Association of

Women Artisans was supported in the development of four kiosks near the beach, and the opening of a craft shop, a restaurant and a culinary instruction facility. In Angola (Luanda), and in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (Gabu, Bafata, Santiago, Santo Antão and São Vicente), microcredit programmes were implemented aiming at the reduction of the effects of female poverty in the most vulnerable communities both in rural as in urban areas.

43. Portugal is also providing support to the promotion of capacity development of line ministries responsible for gender and equality issues, such as the Ministério da Mulher e da Acção Social in Mozambique or the Ministério da Assistência e Reinsercção Social in Angola. The prevention of violence against women and the fight against trafficking in persons as well as the promotion of peace and security are also relevant areas of intervention. In this context, the Central Office for Victims of Violence in Maputo was rehabilitated, and programmes regarding the training of police forces were conducted. In Angola, training, and training-of-trainers, was given in areas of victim protection, the fight against trafficking in persons and asylum rights, and in the city of Lobito, support was given to the Social Centre "Renascer", contributing to the inclusion of around 1,500 women and children affected by the phenomenon of street prostitution and promoting their social reintegration.

44. Finally, regarding awareness-raising in Portugal and in its partner countries, reference should be made to the project "They in the North and in the South", aimed at increasing society's attention for women's role and contribution to local and global development.

III. Conclusions and outlook for the future

45. With national development policy oriented by international efforts to reduce global poverty, Portugal has inscribed the objectives of reaching the Millennium Development Goals at the core of its development strategy. Important developments have occurred in the area of policy coherence and aid effectiveness, as well as on the consolidation of partnerships with civil society.

46. The Government of Portugal recognizes that it is presently facing difficulties in complying with internationally established quantitative goals regarding ODA owing to current financial and economic constraints, but it is strongly committed to its gradual increase. Furthermore, financial shortcomings have made us more attentive and committed to the quality and efficacy of the aid provided, and we believe that very important advances have been made in this regard.

47. The Government of Portugal is actively engaged in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, both at the national level and in its development cooperation strategies. Extremely relevant accomplishments have been made in the national political, legislative and implementation spheres, which have led to political changes in the Government, to considerable investments in financial and human resources and to the adoption of unprecedented legal documents and five national action plans with substantial implications for gender equality. Important measures on awareness-raising, training and education on gender equality issues are also having an important impact, and Portugal is increasingly working on these issues with its younger population, sharing knowledge with and providing information to future decision makers.

48. In the field of development cooperation, Portugal strongly believes that progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals will not be possible without a serious investment in the empowerment of women. For this reason, several concrete initiatives related to gender equality are being promoted in key sectors of development cooperation, such as health, education and economic empowerment. Notwithstanding this, Portugal is aware that further progress is needed to consolidate this approach and is currently engaged in the revision of the national development cooperation strategy on gender and is placing a greater emphasis on this issue in political dialogue with partner countries.

49. Finally, Portugal believes that successful interventions have to be based in the principles of ownership and partnership and that we need to be flexible without losing sight of the ultimate objectives. Dialogue and joint work between relevant social and political actors are fundamental in order to promote adequate policies and measures that respond to the main challenges posed to gender equality and development strategies.